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Lays of  
Quakerdom

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LAYS OF QUAKERDOM





Plumley, Benjamin Rush

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# LAYS *of* QUAKERDOM

By  
"RUTH PLUMLEY"

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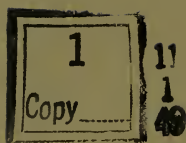


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- I. THE EXECUTION OF MARY DYER.
- II. VISIT OF MARY FISHER TO THE  
SULTAN MOHAMMED IV.
- III. JAMES PARNELL,  
THE QUAKER PROTO-MARTYR.

## THE EXECUTION OF MARY DYER, AT BOSTON, JUNE FIRST, 1660.

MARY DYER was a respectable woman, the wife of a reputable inhabitant of Rhode Island, and the mother of several children. Believing it to be her duty to accompany two friends to Boston, to induce the authorities to repeal the sanguinary laws against Quakers and other dissenters, they went there in September, 1659. The three were arrested "for being Quakers," tried as heretics, and banished under pain of death, being allowed two days to depart. Found subsequently within the jurisdiction, they were again arrested and sentenced to death. The two men were executed on the afternoon of October twenty-seventh, and their dead bodies subjected to the most revolting indignities; denied burial, or coffins, or clothing, they were thrown naked into a pit, which happening to fill with water, alone protected them from beasts of prey.

MARY DYER was reprieved under the gallows at the intercession of her son, and sent home; but returning in April following, she was again arrested, the sentence confirmed, and led to execution on the morning of June first, 1660.

The distance to the gallows was one mile; and the drums were ordered to beat whenever she attempted to speak on her way thither. On the scaffold her life was again offered her, if she would forever depart the jurisdiction; but she could not accept such conditions.

Her meekness, Christian endurance, and death, aroused great sympathy in the colonies, as well as in England, and she was the last but one of the Quakers put to death in America, for the royal mandamus of CHARLES II., requiring their liberation from prison and exemption from persecution, was signed by the King, September ninth, 1660, and proclaimed in New England about two months after; whereupon the Quakers held a general thanksgiving in Boston.

History has few examples of greater suffering, or of higher heroism, than were endured and exhibited by the early Quakers in various parts of the world.

THE EXECUTION OF MARY DYER,  
AT BOSTON, JUNE FIRST, 1660.

I.

WITH his household, quaint and simple,  
In his manly prime,  
By the fire-light sat a QUAKER,  
In the winter time;  
Moved in feeling by the pealing  
Of the Christmas chime:  
Little looked he to the outward;  
Feasts and holy days,  
To his inward faith and worship,  
Were as worldly ways;  
But he scoffed not at the symbols  
Of the people's praise.  
Little loved he art or music,  
And his fire-light falls,  
In fantastic shape and semblance,  
O'er ungarnished walls:  
But he loved the blessed teaching  
Which the chime recalls.  
All so still he sate, and solemn,  
While his own high thought,  
Thronged upon his ample forehead,  
Such a stillness wrought,  
That the mystic spell of SILENCE  
All around him caught.  
Sweetly looked they in that circle,  
Wife and children three;  
Two brave boys beside the mother  
Hushed their boyish glee;

## *Lays of Quakerdom*

And a fair young girl was kneeling  
At her father's knee.

### II.

OUTWARD, with its sweet evangel  
On the ear of TIME,  
Upward far, to meet the star-light,  
Swept the sounding chime,  
As the centuries shall hear it  
Ever more, sublime.  
From the ages dim and distant,  
Through the pealing bell,  
Rolled anew the inspirations  
From His lips that fell,  
On the ancient Mount of Olives,  
By Samaria's well,  
While the echo star-ward dying,  
Seemed each martyr's knell.

### III.

"FATHER, tell us of the Quakers,"  
(Did the children say,)  
"How the cruel Pilgrim rulers  
Drove the Friends away;  
Tell us how they whipped and killed them  
In that olden day,  
When they hung poor MARY DYER—  
Cruel men were they."

### IV.

FEARFUL was the inward conflict  
Ere he made reply,  
For his nature, brave and martial,  
Broke so bold and high

*The Execution of Mary Dyer*

Into flame along his forehead,  
    Lightning from his eye,  
As the martyrs of his people  
    Passed in spirit by,  
Looked he like a warrior waiting  
    For the battle-cry.  
So the fiery indignation  
    Through his pulses ran,  
For a moment, ere the Christian  
    Triumphed o'er the Man;  
And his tones were deep and thrilling  
    As the tale began:

V.

SATE the Puritanic rulers,  
    In a stately row,  
ENDICOTT, with scowl and scorning  
    On his lip and brow,  
While a herd of vulgar bigots  
    Thronged the court below;  
Then came MICHELSON the Marshal,  
    Filled with savage ire,  
Through the motley crowd of gazers,  
    Thrusting MARY DYER,  
With her quiet, grave demeanor,  
    In her quaint attire;  
As the people pressed asunder  
    Round her foot-steps close,  
From the bar she gazed serenely  
    O'er a host of foes;  
Then, the clerk commanding silence,  
    ENDICOTT arose:

*Lays of Quakerdom*

VI.

"ARE you that same MARY DYER,  
With blasphemous breath,  
Whom our erring mercy saving  
From the gulf beneath,  
Banished from the jurisdiction  
Under pain of death?"

Calm and steadfast then she answered:  
"Truly I am she,  
Whom your General Court appointed  
To the gallows-tree,  
Where ye sent our faithful martyrs  
When ye banished me.  
Lo! I come again to bid ye  
Set GOD's servants free!"

"By the council that condemned you  
You were fairly tried;  
And we reaffirm the sentence,"  
ENDICOTT replied:  
"In the prison until morning  
Safely you abide;  
Then, be hanged upon the gallows  
Where your brethren died.  
Look not for a second respite—  
Hope for aid from none;  
Fixed the awful fate that waits you  
With to-morrow's sun."

"Then," replied she, slow and solemn,  
"Let God's will be done;  
To the power that kills the body



## *The Execution of Mary Dyer*

He hath bid us yield;  
Weapons of a carnal warfare  
Are not ours to wield;  
HE will clothe us in HIS armor—  
Guard us with HIS shield.”

### VII.

THEN she seemed to rise in stature,  
And her look was high;  
And there was a light of glory  
Beaming from her eye,  
As she were by angel-presence  
Touched to prophecy.  
Startled by the transformation  
Sate the rulers proud;  
Wondering at her awful beauty  
Gazed the vulgar crowd;  
While her words went through the stillness,  
Ringing clear and loud.

### VIII.

“Now I feel prophetic visions  
Filling all my soul:  
In their light the mists and shadows  
From the future roll.  
Lo! I see a power arising  
Ye shall not control;  
E’en the LORD of HOSTS, in mercy,  
Seeking all your land;  
Judge and ruler, priest and people,  
In HIS presence stand;  
And your boasted power HE holdeth  
In His mighty hand.

## *Lays of Quakerdom*

Cease your cruel persecutions  
Ere these days expire,  
And HE cometh in HIS judgments  
With consuming fire,  
As of old HE came to Edom,  
To Sidon and to Tyre,  
And ye reap a bloody harvest,  
Reap as ye have sown,  
And the lofty spires ye builded  
Reel and thunder down,  
And the woe of desolation  
Fills your ruined town;  
In deserted habitations  
Only DEATH may dwell  
When GOD leaveth no one living  
Of HIS wrath to tell.  
Cease, oh! cease your persecutions—  
All may yet be well.”  
So she ended. Awe and silence  
O’er the council fell.

### IX.

“AND *did* GOD,” asked little MARY,  
“All the town destroy?”

“Wait and hear the story ended,”  
Said the elder boy:  
“If they ceased their persecutions,  
GOD would not destroy.”

### X.

MORNING o’er the Pilgrim city  
Breaking still and sweet,

## *The Execution of Mary Dyer*

Heard the deep and mingled murmur  
    Of the hurrying feet,  
And the voices of the people  
    Thronging to the street;  
From afar the heavy rolling  
    Of the muffled drum,  
With the measured tread of soldiers  
    And the general hum,  
Warned the captive in the prison  
    That the hour had come.

All her simple garb arranging  
    With a decent care,  
Knelt she in a holy silence,  
    Lost in secret prayer,  
While her radiant face attested  
    God was with her there.  
At the Marshal's brutal summons  
    Came she, firm and meek,  
Saying: "All this show to escort  
    One so poor and weak?"  
But they beat the drums the louder  
    When they heard her speak.

### XI.

ARMS were clashing, eyes were flashing,  
    In that thick array,  
As the Puritan exulting  
    Rode along the way;  
For he led the hated Quaker  
    To her death that day.  
Were they men, brave men, and noble,  
    Chivalrous and high,

## *Lays of Quakerdom*

Marshaled thus against a WOMAN,  
And no champion by?  
Were they husbands, sons, and fathers,  
And their households nigh,  
When they led a WIFE and MOTHER  
For her faith to die?

### XII.

ON the scaffold MARY DYER  
Standeth silent now,  
With the martyr's crown of glory  
Kindling round her brow:  
And her meek face bent in pity  
On the crowd below:  
Then Priest WILSON, full of scorning,  
Cried: "Repent! repent!"  
But she answered: "I have sought you,  
By our FATHER sent;  
Sought *you*, cruel persecutors,  
That *you* might repent."

"Will you leave us, leave us ever,  
Vex us never more,  
If your vagrant life we give you,  
As we gave before:  
To your distant home and kindred  
Once again restore?"

### XIII.

MOVED the mighty deep within her  
For a little space,  
And a surge of human feeling  
Broke across her face;

*The Execution of Mary Dyer*

Then out-shone the greater glory  
    Of the heavenly grace,  
As all loves of earth descended  
    To their lower place,  
Seemed she in transfiguration;  
    Such a light was shed,  
Like a halo from her spirit  
    Round about her head,  
That o'er all the ghastly gibbet  
    The effulgence spread.

XIV.

THEN one WEBB, the burly captain,  
    Rising roughly said:  
"MARY, be your blood upon you;  
    Falsely you are led;  
By the LAW, which you have broken,  
    Not by *us*, 'tis shed."  
And he gave the fearful signal,  
    While she meekly bowed:  
Fell the fatal drop beneath her;  
    Women shrieked aloud,  
And a cold and dismal shudder  
    Ran through all the crowd.

XV.

FOR the people stood awe-stricken  
    When the deed was done;  
Some who seemed to feel a shadow  
    Stealing o'er the sun,  
Feared the dreaded day of vengeance  
    Had that hour begun;  
Some believed they saw the spirit

*Lays of Quakerdom*

With their outward eyes,  
In its shining shape and semblance  
Glorified, arise,  
With a slow majestic motion  
Floating to the skies;  
Ever upward, upward ever,  
Star-like, out of view,  
Smiling as it joined the angels,  
Smiling still, adieu;  
And all these believed the martyr's  
Faith and Word were true.

XVI.

NOT in vain had MARY DYER  
Lived and prophesied,  
For the noble Pilgrim people  
Curbed their ruler's pride.  
Though the scorned and hated Quakers  
Grew and multiplied,  
For their faith one other martyr  
Was the last who died.







## VISIT OF MARY FISHER TO THE SULTAN MOHAMMED IV.

AT ADRIANOPLE, 1658.

MARY FISHER, on her return from New England, where she met severe treatment, set out on her mission to MOHAMMED IV., then encamped with his army without Adrianople. She reached Smyrna by sea, but the English Consul sent her back to Venice, no doubt believing her to be crazy, as most people are charitably supposed to be who are in advance of their times. From Venice she made her way by land, on foot, to Adrianople, more than *six hundred miles*, through a country filled with soldiers and outlaws of every description; delivered her message to the Sultan, who assembled his staff, and received her in state, acknowledged her "mission," and the truth of what she said, and requested her to stay in his dominions. Upon her declining to do so, he offered her escort to Constantinople, saying that the country was full of danger, and he would not, on any account, harm should come to her in his kingdom. She declined his escort, and reached Constantinople and England in safety.

Some idea of the peril and privation of this journey may be had from MARY MONTAGUE's letters, who, as the wife of the English Ambassador, went to Adrianople nearly fifty years *after* MARY FISHER's visit, and erroneously states that *she* was the first Christian woman who had made the dangerous journey since the Greek Emperors, and POPE bewailed her as one environed by the greatest peril; whereas, the heroic Quakeress, defended by no guard, under the auspices of no Government—save that which is above all kingdoms—made the journey half a century before; and it may indicate how contemptuous must have been the feeling at that time toward the Quakers, seeing that this act of true heroism was not known to MARY MONTAGUE, even under the circumstances of a similar journey from the same country and city, and that no contemporaneous history records it, or any tradition preserves it, save the "Memorials of the Meeting," if there was any, to which the simple Quaker returned her credentials, if she had any, saying she "had performed the service to the peace and satisfaction of her own mind."

The Turkish power reached its height in the reign of MOHAMMED IV., at the successful termination of the siege of Candia, and began its decline in the same reign at the Turkish siege of Vienna, when SOBIESKI, King of Poland, came to the aid of Austria, and defeated the Turks with great slaughter.

MOHAMMED IV. was subsequently deposed, and died in the Seraglio, after five years' seclusion. He was a great and splendid Monarch, who reigned nearly fifty years, in the early part of which he extended his dominions and consolidated his power, reducing the janizaries of his kingdom, so long the dread of the ruler and the terror of the people. His speech on the occasion of his compulsory abdication, is a rare specimen of eloquence.

VISIT OF MARY FISHER TO THE  
SULTAN MOHAMMED IV.  
AT ADRIANOPLE, 1658.

I.

**I**T was Summer. Vapors golden  
Crowning all the regal hills,  
Hung like snowy veils of vestals  
Swaying o'er the singing rills,  
And along the Orient glowing  
Drew their rosy curtaining  
Backward from the sun, advancing  
To his Empire like a King.  
On the hillside lay the cattle  
Stretching in the golden glow,  
As it passed to wake the sleepers  
In the quiet vale below.  
Measured as the march of armies,  
Filed the shadows o'er the grain  
Bent beneath the spectral columns;  
Trooping in an endless train.  
Stately stood the trees, displaying  
Pearls upon their leafy stems;  
At the zephyrs' soft imploring,  
Flinging down their diadems  
To the humble grass beneath them  
In an ample wealth of gems,  
All the air was filled with fragrance,  
Breathing through the voice of song;  
Forth from hill, and stream, and woodland  
Rolled the morning hymn along.

## *Lays of Quakerdom*

### II.

In the country, calm and holy,  
    When the Summer days were come,  
With his household sat the Quaker  
    In their old paternal home;  
Where the earth his fathers nourished  
    Long upon her bounteous breast,  
When their simple lives were ended  
    Held them in unbroken rest;  
Where primeval trees the homestead  
    In their vast embraces fold;  
And within their solid fibres  
    Annals of the ages hold;  
Ever to the life around them  
    By the leafy minstrels told.  
Bending now, in stately gossip,  
    With the wandering Summer breeze:  
Now in nobler strains relating  
    Stories of the centuries;  
Now, like orators, declaiming,  
    Swaying into awful form;  
Toss their arms and lift their voices  
    O'er the tumult of the storm;  
All the day their lore repeating  
    In the heedless ear of strife;  
All the night the calm stars listen  
    To their minstrelsy of life.

### III.

To the lindens o'er the threshold,  
    On a glorious Summer day,  
Came the merry children bounding  
    Fresh and blooming from their play;

### *Visit of Mary Fisher*

Grouping round to hear their father  
    Tell another Quaker Lay;  
Tell them how brave MARY FISHER  
    To the Sultan bore her *word*;  
How the noble Turk received her  
    And her *Message from the Lord*.  
Low voiced, from subdued emotion,  
    Ballad like, the tale began;  
Sweetly in the Summer stillness  
    Thus the simple story ran:

#### IV.

The Sultan MAHMOUD lay encamped  
    Within his guarded hold;  
Full fifty thousand men of war  
    Were with their leader bold.  
Full fifty thousand cimetars  
    Flashed in the waning light,  
And the brave Moslem only mourned  
    Their weapons were so bright.  
Flung out above the royal camp  
    MOHAMMED'S flag revealed  
The shining crescent's silver rim  
    Within its sacred field.  
Stretched in the opening of his tent  
    The mighty Chief reclined;  
High purposes and vast designs  
    Revolving in his mind.  
The shadow of the lofty thought  
    Fell slowly o'er his face,  
And softened, in its noble lines,  
    The fierceness of his race.  
On costly tapestries of the East

## *Lays of Quakerdom*

His royal person laid;  
And gleamed amid the Tyrian dyes  
His keen Damascus blade.  
The ample turban round his brow  
Leaned on his swarthy hand;  
While his unconscious fingers plucked  
The jewels from the band.  
His eye was resting on the flag  
As in its shade he lay,  
Pondering on *Islam's* vast renown  
And wide extended sway.

### V.

For then the Crescent's shining arch  
Flamed in the tropic sun,  
And flashed where, up far Arctic nights,  
The northern streamers run.  
From distant Asia's peopled plains  
And mountain steppes, afar,  
Vast hordes of fierce believers came  
To *Islam's* holy war.  
And the Great Vizier KIRPULI  
Was marching to his liege,  
Triumphant with the trophies won  
At Candia's bloody siege.  
The armies of the Faithful held  
Their undisputed way,  
And the mute nations paled before  
The Moslem's dread array.

### VI.

The Sultan dreamed of boundless power,  
To wield his conquering sword,

*Visit of Mary Fisher*

And make the unbelievers own  
    *The Prophet of the Lord;*  
To fling the banner of his Faith  
    O'er *Islam's* ancient reign,  
Above the valleys of Castile,  
    The mountain heights of Spain.  
In the great Temple of the Cross  
    Marshal his Moslem force,  
And make its sacred fane at Rome  
    A stable for his horse!  
The symbol of his perfect power,  
    On *Islam's* flag unfurled,  
Behold the crescent, round, and rise,  
    Full orb'd, upon the world!

VII.

As thus he lay, an Aga came,  
    With many a low salaâm:  
"What wouldst thou now?" the Sultan said,  
    In accent deep and calm;  
"Shadow of GOD: without the camp  
    A Christian waits, abhorred,  
Who bringeth from her English home  
    '*A Message from the Lord.*'"  
They drove her thrice beyond the lines;  
    Boldly again she came,  
Demanding audience calm and high,  
    In ALLAH's holy name.  
"A woman, saidst thou?" MAHMOUD rose,  
    Still leaning on his hand:  
"A woman, seeking *Islam's* shrine  
    From her own Christian land?"

*Lays of Quakerdom*

"Most mighty Sultan, one who would  
Your royal harem grace:  
Rich in the sweetness of her sex,  
The beauty of her race;  
But not to Mecca's holy shrine  
Her pilgrim foot-steps came:  
To preach the glory of the Cross  
In her own PROPHET's name;  
Not at the evening *Namas* bowed  
Her unbelieving head."

"And came she to the camp alone?"

"Alone!" the Aga said.  
"Thus saith the infidel: Arrived  
At Smyrna by the sea;  
Captive they sent her from the strand;  
At Venice set her free.  
From thence on foot, two hundred leagues,  
Alone by night and day,  
Her journey through a war-like land  
A weary distance lay.  
(Our boldest Spahis could not ride  
Safely along that way.)  
Her PROPHET gave her meat and drink,  
And nerved each sinking limb;  
In clouds by day, by night in fire,  
HE bade her follow him  
To Adrianople's royal camp,  
(So saith her doubtful word,)  
To bring the Refuge of the world  
'*A Message from the Lord.*'"



*Visit of Mary Fisher*

VIII.

The Sultan mused awhile, and spoke :  
    "Caimakin, GOD is GOD ;  
What wouldst *thou* with this infidel?"

    "Chastise her with the rod!"

Up to his feet the Sultan sprung ;  
    His glance was stern and high ;  
The Aga and Caimakin paled  
    Before his flashing eye.

"Now by my Father's soul," he said,  
    "My own right royal arm  
Would from thy shoulders strike thy head,  
    Shouldst thou that Christian harm.  
The Prophet's self had not inspired  
    A sterner, loftier faith  
To lift a woman's soul above  
    Danger, and toil, and death.  
She *shall* have audience. To our staff  
    Our royal mandate bear ;  
We shall await them in our tent,  
    After the morning prayer.  
See thou that noble Christian, then,  
    Straight to our audience led ;  
And for her safety and repose  
    Thou'lt answer with thy head."

IX.

Morning, beyond the eastern hills  
    Her glorious march begun ;

## *Lays of Quakerdom*

And Adrianople's holy mosques  
    Stood glittering in the sun.  
The loud Muezzins' pious call  
    Fell from the minaret;  
Reverent the fierce believers all  
    That sacred summons met.  
The standard of the Prophet swung  
    Slowly upon the air,  
While its defenders in the camp  
    Devoutly knelt in prayer.

### X.

Alone, amid that turbaned host,  
    By larger truth made free,  
The Christian, at the call, withheld  
    The homage of her knee.  
Fierce bigots, with their eyes of fire,  
    Saw her refuse to kneel;  
And swarthy hands, unclasped from prayer  
    Convulsive clutched the steel.  
Apart she sate, serene and still,  
    Within the open tent;  
To that devout delusion round  
    Respectful pity lent.  
*Her* spirit through the Sacred Courts  
    Its own high path-way trod,  
In the still temple of the soul  
    Communing with her God.

### XI.

As thus she sate, the Aga came,  
    By the Caimakin sent,  
To bid her, in the Sultan's name,

## *Visit of Mary Fisher*

Attend him in his tent.  
The fiery warriors, on her way,  
Gathered in silent wrath,  
And, motionless as forms of bronze,  
Ranged them along her path.  
Swarthy and grim on either side  
The breathing statues stood;  
Two lines of sabres, half unsheathed,  
Seemed thirsting for her blood.  
With folded hands and steady step,  
And eye in quiet, bent  
Upon the savage throng, she passed  
Into the royal tent.

## XII.

The Sultan, on a raised Divan,  
Sat in his splendid state;  
Grouped in a crescent round the tent  
His staff and escort wait;  
Warriors of grave and noble mien  
Ranged as they ranked in fame,  
Who to that audience with the Giaour  
Slow and reluctant came.  
Rich draperies of Damascus hung  
In many an ample fold;  
(Old triumphs on their emerald ground  
Were wrought in gems and gold),  
That backward from the Sultan's seat  
Were looped on either hand;  
The *Mufti* and *Caimakin* stood  
Beside each jeweled band.  
The Koran on a frame of pearl  
Its sacred page displayed;

## *Lays of Quakerdom*

The Greek Dragoman, waiting near,  
Profound obeisance made.

### XIII.

Amid the dazzling splendor round,  
In sweet and solemn mood,  
The Quaker, in her humble garb,  
Serene and simple stood,  
Despite the Aga's frequent sign  
To make her low salaäm;  
Respectful, but unmoved remained,  
Silent, and firm, and calm.

### XIV.

"*Christian,*" at length the Sultan said,  
"We wait to hear thy word:  
Declare it, neither less nor more,  
Thy '*Message from the Lord.*'"

So still she stood, again he said:  
"Speak what thou hast to say;  
If these rude warriors waken dread,  
My staff alone shall stay.  
Speak freely, we have hearts to feel,  
And ears prepared to hear;  
And be thy message good or ill,  
Speak, thou hast none to fear."

"I seek," she said, "the Life within,  
Where strength and wisdom lie,  
To give my utterance weight, and power,  
And unction, from on high."

*Visit of Mary Fisher*

Gravely the listening Moslem heard,  
And patient and sedate;  
Waiting the Christian's farther word  
The turbaned warriors sate.

XV.

Below, the encampment seemed to lay,  
That morning, hushed and still;  
The distant chargers' friendly neigh  
Came faintly up the hill,  
With sound of steel that peaceful rung  
From restless Spahis nigh,  
As some impatient horseman flung  
His burnished armor by.  
The ancient Hebrus rolled along  
By the old cypress groves,  
From whose deep shade the turtle's song  
Proclaimed its peaceful loves.  
The sun-light fell in waves of gold  
In all that bounteous clime.  
Where melody and fragrance hold  
Perpetual Summer-time.  
As Nature to that scene of strife  
Her holiest influence lent,  
Subdued, the fierce surrounding life  
Throbbled through the silent tent.

XVI.

A light upon the Christian's face  
From her rapt spirit broke:  
And slowly, with unconscious grace  
And solemn power, she spoke:

*Lays of Quakerdom*

XVII.

“Bold follower of thy Prophet, hear  
    The *Message of the Lord*;  
Ye men of carnal war, give ear  
    Unto his living word.  
The HOLY SPIRIT bade me leave  
    My home and native land,  
Bearing GOD’S message in my heart,  
    My life within my hand;  
Led me in fire through dreary nights,  
    In clouds through burning days;  
O’er pathless deeps and mountain heights,  
    And by untraveled ways;  
To bid your Sultan in his youth  
    Seek an immortal crown,  
And build in GOD’S eternal truth  
    Your glory and renown:  
To wield the great and growing power,  
    Vouchsafed you from above,  
To help establish in the earth  
    Justice, and Truth, and Love;  
To leave your heathen ways, and live  
    The husband and the wife,  
Around the sacred hearth of home  
    A higher, holier life.  
GOD made the union of the twain  
    When first the race began;  
*Forever* shall HIS act remain  
    The marriage law of man.  
GOD bids *thee*, great and mighty King,  
    Thy wars and fightings cease,  
And thy victorious armies bring  
    To the pursuits of peace;

*Visit of Mary Fisher*

A greater than *thy* Prophet speaks;  
Hear thou His living word:  
'Make of thy spear a pruning hook,  
A plough-share of thy sword.  
Thou mak'st a wilderness to howl  
Where peopled cities stood,  
And marchest through the affrighted earth  
In surging seas of blood.  
Before thee, horror and despair,  
Ruin and death behind;  
Famine and pestilence are there,  
Thou scourge of human kind!"

XVIII.

Clear and distinct her utterance fell  
Upon the stillness round;  
The turbaned warriors half uprose  
To catch the startling sound;  
As the Dragoman passed her words  
Into their native tongue,  
To strike the bold blasphemer down  
A score of warriors sprung.  
A ring of quivering sabres gleamed,  
Grasped in each swarthy hand  
But the bold bigots quailed before  
The Sultan's high command.  
A moment, o'er the Christian's head  
The flashing weapons hung;  
Then each within its sheath of steel  
Keen and reluctant rung.

XIX.

Unmoved and calm the Quaker stood,  
But DEATH, as *he* drew nigh,

*Lays of Quakerdom*

Heightened the radiance of her face,  
The lustre of her eye;  
Deepened her clear and thrilling tone,  
That o'er the turbaned throng,  
Obedient to the Sultan's sign,  
Unfaltering, rolled along.

XX.

“ 'Tis written, and forever makes  
Part of GOD's holy Word,  
'Whoso the sword of warfare takes  
Shall perish by the sword.'  
Your cities stand upon the dust  
Of nations passed away,  
Who perished wholly; for their trust  
In carnal weapons lay.  
*Israel*, an alien, o'er the earth  
Wanders without a home;  
Lo! where are Persia, Syria now,  
Egypt, and Greece, and Rome?  
Forever lost to Time and Life!  
Thus GOD fulfills His *Word*;  
'Whoso shall take the sword in strife  
Shall perish by the sword,'  
*Islam* shall not escape the woe  
Of those who build by wrong;  
Strong as thou art, great Sultan, know  
That GOD is great and strong;  
For principalities, nor powers,  
Nor heights, nor depths untrod;  
Things past, nor present, nor to come,  
Limit the power of GOD.  
Turn thou to peace! or GOD shall wring



*Visit of Mary Fisher*

The sceptre from thy hand,  
And the great woe of nations bring  
Upon thy favored land.  
Then shall your Crescent's light go down  
In darkness and in blood;  
Forgot, your glory and renown,  
Where once your temples stood."

XXI.

She ceased; and though above the throng  
A solemn silence fell,  
Deep in the hangings of the tent  
Her utterance seemed to dwell.  
Pale as a prophetess she stood;  
Her eyes were filled with light;  
Mutely the wondering warriors gazed,  
The presence was so bright.  
The aged *Mufti* stroked his beard,  
Pondering on what he saw:  
"An infidel! so filled with power  
Without His holy law!"

XXII.

"Christian," the Sultan said, "we see  
The Great GOD gives thee words.  
Dwell in our land; we welcome thee;  
*Thy Message is the Lord's.*"

"Great Sultan, may thy people own  
*The Word of Truth* I brought;  
In peace I leave you, and *alone*,  
Even as your camp I sought."

*Lays of Quakerdom*

“Escort to *Stamboul* thou shalt have,  
Escort, the best of mine;  
I would not, for an hundred lives,  
That harm should come to thine.”

“Ho! Kizlar-Aga, bid thy staff  
Send me a thousand horse!  
The Spahis of our yellow flag,  
The boldest of their force;  
And bid them hither; *Morah*, bring  
My noble Arab mare;  
Brave Christian, *Morah* will be proud  
Courage like thine to bear.”

XXIII.

Moved by his generous words, she said:  
“I thank thee, noble Turk;  
I do not need thy men of war  
To do *my Master's work*;  
His arm is underneath me still;  
He is my staff and guide;  
Legions of angels, at His will,  
Shall gather to my side.  
Now peace be with you from above;  
Peace in your councils dwell;  
For in our common FATHER'S love  
I bid you all—farewell!”

She turned, and, meekly and sedate,  
Passed slowly from the tent,  
While the great Sultan, where he sate,  
In salutation bent.  
Thoughtful, unconscious that his hand

*Visit of Mary Fisher*

Rested upon his sword,  
He sate, revolving in his mind  
The Christian's fearless word.  
Lifting his eye, the Crescent's light—  
Kindling above him then—  
Flashed inward through its quiet depths.  
And fired his soul again.

XXIV.

Who seek to know, the record tells  
That Quaker, traveling far,  
Went peaceful to her English home;  
The Sultan went to war:  
And at Vienna's fearful siege,  
On many a dreadful field,  
Before the soldiers of the Cross  
Beheld his armies yield;  
And, as without, relentless foes  
Humbled his power and pride;  
Within, as stormy factions rose,  
Beset on every side,  
By Adrianople's mosque, resigned  
His sceptre and his sword;  
And dying, pondered in his mind  
That *Message from the Lord*.

XXV.

Two hundred years! The Sultan rests  
Upon his tomb of state;  
While *Islam's* Empire rocks around  
Upon the brink of fate.  
Beyond the Balkan mountains high  
Its ancient foemen throng;

*Lays of Quakerdom*

Their drum-note echoes, rolling by,  
    Lo! "*God is great and strong!*"  
Around her lessening lines, and near  
    The nation's clashing swords,  
Repeat in Islam's startled ear:  
    "*That Message was the LORD's!*"

XXVI.

Two hundred years! The Quaker sleeps  
    Within her nameless grave;  
But a whole kindred people keeps  
    Her memory pure and brave.  
The while, her "*Faith of Peace and Love.*"  
    That feebly then began,  
Grows with the world's great life to be  
    *The common Faith of man.*





JAMES PARNELL,  
*The Quaker Proto-Martyr.*

JAMES PARNELL was born in Nottingham, England, of humble parents, but he possessed good abilities and a liberal education.

When GEORGE FOX was imprisoned in Carlisle, in 1653, PARNELL, then in his seventeenth year, was among those who visited the great Quaker in prison, and the result was the conversion of the young visitor to the faith of the Quakers, of which he afterward became an eminent expounder, and for which he was the first martyr.

PARNELL began to preach before he was seventeen years old, and, in pursuance of his mission, went to Cambridge about April, 1655, where he was challenged by the Baptists to public disputation: the fame of his eloquence and power had preceded him.

The meeting was held, but resulted in little discussion and much disturbance, chiefly (according to PARNELL) from "brutish scholars who plotted against me, and from Baptists and Independents who, though bitter enemies to each other, were joined friends against me."

He continued preaching, disputing and exhorting during fourteen days, when he was committed to jail by WILLIAM PICKERING, Mayor of Cambridge, on a charge "of issuing two papers, one against the corruptions of the ministry, and one against the corruption of the magistracy."

They kept him confined, and "tossed from prison to dungeon," during two whole sessions, when, a jury finding nothing against him, he was discharged, with a "pass" under the title of "Rogue," and conducted three miles out of the city. Subsequently he returned to Cambridge, and continued in that vicinity for about six months, preaching to great assemblies of people, and, through opposition and persecution, establishing many in his faith.

From Cambridge he went to Essex, to be present at a "public meeting and fast held at Great Coggeshall by order of the authorities, to counteract the wicked heresies of the Quakers." There he preached and exhorted for about a week to many thousands of people who thronged to hear him, until he was arrested by Justice WAKERING, in the name of the Lord Protector, and committed to the common jail as a mover of seditions, and blasphemer, near the middle of July, 1655.

Here he was closely confined for some weeks and denied all communication with his friends, until the next Chelmsford Assizes, when he was chained beside one suspected of murder, on a chain with five others, where he remained night and day, as they marched through the country to the court, about twenty miles distant.

The people were surprised at his treatment, and the Court, to prevent the expression of any sympathy for him, ordered the irons removed from his hands when he was brought to trial.

He was then arraigned, charged with blasphemy and sedition; and at the trial his old persecutors influenced the judge and jury by malicious statements, to which he was not allowed to reply, and upon his acquittal by the jury, Judge HILLS committed him for contempt of magistracy and priesthood and fined him heavily.

He was then removed to Colchester Castle, and subjected to systematic cruelty and outrages inconceivable to us at this day. Denied a bed, he was obliged to lie on the bare stones of the prison, where, in wet weather, the walls were dripping with water, and during the cold of winter he was almost deprived of clothing, frequently of food, beaten until he was nearly insensible by the jailor and keeper, all his friends denied access to him, and not permitted to relieve his sufferings. He was placed in a "Hole in the wall," which was probably the recess of the window, quite deep, as the walls are nine feet thick. This "recess" was so high from the stone floor, that he was obliged to reach it part way by a ladder, which, being six feet too short, a rope at the upper end aided him to his wretched abode. The keeper would not allow him a basket and string, which his friends desired to furnish, to draw his food up to



him, and he was therefore compelled to ascend the rope with one hand and carry his provisions in the other, which he did with great difficulty, being a person of small stature and feeble frame, much weakened by long exposure and privation.

On one occasion, when attempting to grasp the rope, it eluded his hand, and he fell with great force upon the pavement below, by which he was seriously injured. He was then placed in a recess nearer the ground, and left to die.

His case was powerfully represented to Cromwell's government, and several Quakers offered to lie in his place, but no mitigation of his punishment could be obtained, nor any concession but the admission of two Friends to see him die, but who were refused permission to remove his body, which was buried in the castle-yard by the jailor's assistants.

He died in the spring of 1656, after incredible suffering, when only *nineteen years old*, exhorting his friends to "keep the faith," saying he had "*seen great things*," and beseeching them in his last moments, "*not to hold him: to let him go!*"

So he departed, leaving his name to be numbered with those who in all ages have lived, and labored, and suffered *for the spiritual emancipation of man*.



JAMES PARNELL,  
*The Quaker Proto-Martyr.*

**I**T was June; her bloom and beauty  
Then the queenly month displayed,  
And in her rich robes of summer  
All the joyous earth arrayed.  
Now the Quaker, near his homestead,  
In the woodland, on the hill,  
Stood beside the stream proclaiming  
All its mission to the mill.  
Busy, down beneath the chestnuts,  
By the meadows green and still,  
There, the willows, o'er the water—  
Loving patrons of the stream—  
Bend to see it run and ramble,  
Or to watch it sleep and dream;  
Never weary of its music,  
Glad to hear it sing along;  
All their lines of grace and beauty  
Waving plaudits of the song.  
But the statelier beech and maple  
To the hill-side group withdrew,  
Where the old oak, vast and rugged,  
In his simple grandeur grew.  
There the pines, with solemn voices,  
Speak the oracles of Fate,  
And the walnuts, like old warders,  
Guard the arch-way of the gate;  
And the spectral Lombard poplars,  
Stately as old gaints stand,  
Wasting, with the woes of exile,  
Slowly, in a foreign land;

## *Lays of Quakerdom*

While the aspen, all a-tremble  
    With a trouble never told,  
Seeks the sweet acacia, swaying  
    With its fringing bloom of gold:  
And the elms above the threshold  
    Drape the old and mossy eaves;  
And the maples feel the sunlight  
    Streaming on their silver leaves.

Now, beneath the stately arches  
    Of the old boughs, high and wide,  
Southward, as the morning marches,  
    Shifting to the shaded side,  
Calm and happy sat the Quaker,  
    With his ample forehead bare,  
Silent, in the softened sunlight,  
    And the balmy summer air;  
Listening to the ringing laughter  
    Of his daughter, young and fair:  
While the mother sat, serenely  
    Smiling in maternal pride  
At the elder brother, kneeling  
    On the green grass by her side.  
With a tender, reverent feeling  
    Gazed he on her placid face,  
Where the spirits, outward looking,  
    Had the sweet and quiet grace  
Of a strong soul, gathered inward  
    From the storm of worldly strife,  
Never shaken, never drifting  
    From the centre of its life.  
At her feet the mastiff lying,  
    Stretched upon his grassy bed,

*James Parnell*

Held the younger brother resting,  
Pillowed on his stately head.

Now the children, grouped in stillness  
Round their father's ample chair,  
Waited for another story,  
Promised when they gathered there;  
How young PARNELL preached and suffered  
For the holy cause of Truth;  
And, a captive, poor and lonely,  
Perished in his early youth.  
How, within his narrow prison,  
In Colchester's castle-wall,  
Died the *first of Quaker martyrs*,  
And the youngest of them all.

"Autumn, o'er the land of England,  
Saw the fields of ripening corn,  
Waiting for the reaper's sickle,  
Waving in the breath of morn.  
And it saw a holier harvest;  
For the mighty MASTER then  
Bade HIS own anointed reapers  
Gather in the souls of men.  
Lo! the fields were white already,  
But the laborers were few;  
And some trembled as they entered  
On that service, high and new.  
Some there were who, strong and steady,  
Trode the narrow line of right;  
Shining, in an age of darkness,  
Sons and daughters of the light.  
*One* there was, a youth, and noble,

*Lays of Quakerdom*

Though he came of humble blood,  
Who, with manhood's high endurance,  
At his post of duty stood.  
Frail of form, and fair in feature,  
On his face the bloom of youth  
Blended with the beauty breaking  
Outward from a soul of truth.  
Learned he was, and filled with wisdom,  
Sweet and eloquent of tongue;  
And the thronging people marveled  
At the power of one so young.  
To them, all around him swaying  
On the still mid-summer morn,  
Much he spake of that old Gospel  
To these latter ages borne.  
Much he reasoned, much disputed  
With the vast and heaving crowd,  
Which a furious priesthood troubled  
By its scorning fierce and loud:  
'Hear ye how this fellow raileth  
In the very house of prayer?  
Shall the Church of GOD be sacred?  
Are not *we* his servants there?  
See! this man defiles the altar:  
At your peril hear ye him.' "

. . . . .

Then the people, drunk with passion,  
Surged upon him, fierce and grim;  
But he held their rage suspended  
By the simple power of truth;  
Till, from awe, were some who listened,  
Some, from pity of his youth.

*James Parnell*

Then his manly voice ascended  
    O'er the slow-subsiding din;  
And he spake with power and freedom  
    Of the "GLORIOUS LIGHT WITHIN."  
Lo! this is the CHRIST, the TEACHER!  
    He will teach you of HIS ways:  
This is that out-pouring SPIRIT  
    Promised in these latter days.  
Now the old shall dwell in visions,  
    And the young shall prophesy;  
And ye all may feel, ye people,  
    That the power of GOD is nigh;  
Nigh, within your hearts and spirits,  
    As the great Apostle said:  
Save in fearful sin and trespass  
    Ye be reprobate and dead.  
Think you, in your steeple houses  
    God's eternal presence stands?  
Nay! HE dwelleth not in temples  
    Made by any human hands.  
But your bodies are HIS temples,  
    And HIS holy Church is one:  
Every soul redeemed becometh  
    In its walls a living stone;  
And HIS SPIRIT now ordaineth  
    Preachers of HIS word again  
Not your priesthood, formed and fashioned  
    By the carnal wills of men;  
Prophets who divine for money,  
    Preachers who do preach for hire;  
And GOD's judgments shall consume them,  
    Like the "chaff before the fire."  
Then the angry priests and rulers

## *Lays of Quakerdom*

Cried again, in greater wrath:  
"Shall this babbler and blasphemer  
Linger longer in your path?"

. . . . .  
But the people were divided,  
Tossed and heaving to and fro;  
Some believed an evil spirit  
Sought them, from the realms below.  
Some believed a prophet risen,  
With the power of ancient days;  
These, amid the wild commotion,  
Stood in silent awe and praise.

One, a maiden, with her tresses  
From her fair face backward flung;  
With clasped hands, and pale lips parted,  
Ever on his accents hung;  
And a matron, on whom rested  
Some great sorrow's sombre hue,  
Stood in light, as one illumined  
By a glorious hope, and new;  
And a white haired peasant murmured,  
Bowed by labor and by years,  
As his hard hand from the furrows  
Of his rough face brushed the tears,  
"Lo! mine eyes have seen THY glory;  
Now I wait for my release;  
In *my* day THY Gospel liveth;  
Let THY servant rest in peace."  
Thoughtful, with his bare arms folded  
On his broad and brawny breast,  
Stood a stalwart yeoman, kindling  
With a dawning hope of rest.



*James Parnell*

"Can this be the day of promise?  
Will the Thousand Years begin?  
Shall this prophet, born among us,  
Bring that glorious promise in?"

"Tut! man! but he has a devil,"  
Growled an old and surly boor.  
"Devils do not," said another,  
"Preach the Gospel to the poor."  
"Have our herdsmen grown to prophets?"  
Asked a proud and haughty dame.  
"Few of old," the matron answered,  
"Of the great and noble came."  
"When ye follow this man's teaching,"  
Said a townsman, worldly wise,  
"Ye shall see our nation's greatness  
Sinking never more to rise."

While among themselves disputing,  
Some in anger, rude and loud;  
As, his present mission ended,  
Slowly PARNELL left the crowd,  
Then one Justice WAKERING to him  
In hot haste and passion came,  
Saying roughly, "I arrest you  
In the Lord Protector's name;  
For you do but sow seditions  
Where your wicked railings fall."  
Nothing moved, he only answered,  
"So TERTULLUS said of PAUL."

Then they led him to their prison—  
To that dismal den of sin;

## *Lays of Quakerdom*

He, so pure and young and simple,  
Thurst with thieves and felons in.  
Where a brutal herd around him  
With low scoff and cursing came,  
Jest obscene and ribald laughter,  
Seeming lost to fear or shame.  
"Heigh oh! who is this new comer?"  
Said one, ruder than the rest.  
"Room, ye gentles! room and welcome  
For a new and stately guest.  
Ha! what have we here? a Quaker!  
Quake, ye culprits! quake for fear.  
Come, Sir Preacher, give 's a sermon;  
Marry! much we need it here."  
"Silence!" growled a burly felon;  
"Let that puny boy alone.  
Can your coward hearts discover  
No arms equal to your own?"  
Then the Quaker saw the tumult  
Into savage brawling break;  
But, intrepid, sweet, and earnest,  
In their very midst he spake:

"Men and brethren, poor and sinful,  
Wanderers from the way of right,  
Have ye nothing left to live for,  
But to swear, and brawl, and fight?  
Though ye seem of *men* forsaken,  
GOD is dwelling near to you,  
And *He* seeth, with your evil,  
All the little good ye do.  
Ever in your souls HIS SPIRIT  
With your sinful purpose strives;

*James Parnell*

And HE seeketh thus to win you  
    Back to better, happier lives.  
Listen to HIS holy teaching,  
    Ere your cups of woe be full :  
'Though your sins are as the scarlet,  
    HE will make them white as wool.'  
To your low estates HE bringeth  
    Power and pity from above,  
Greater than all human mercy,  
    Stronger than all human love.  
Some among ye may remember  
    When ye walked in purer ways ;  
Or beside your mothers prattled,  
    In your childhood's happy days.  
Ye must now become as children,  
    And your better lives begin ;  
Then these outward bonds shall vanish,  
    And your stronger bonds within."

Low and clear through all the prison  
    Fell his sweet and simple word,  
And the astonished felons round him  
    Ceased their brawling as they heard.  
Some with half-clenched hands suspended  
    Held them from the brutal blow ;  
Some, by gentle accents melted,  
    Bowed in silent sorrow low.  
Some did weep to feel upon them  
    Swift and crowning memories come ;  
Life mis-spent, its treasures wasted ;  
    Love and peace, and hope and home.  
"Is it?" said that burly felon,  
    With his tears upon his cheeks,

## *Lays of Quakerdom*

Quivering lip and utterance broken,  
    "Is it man or angel speaks?"  
Some unmoved and stony hearted  
    Shrunk to angles of the room;  
Still, but sullen and defiant,  
    Crouching in their native gloom.  
While the Quaker, calm and peaceful,  
    By the heavenly presence blest,  
Stretched him on his prison pallet,  
    To a sweet, unbroken rest.

In that gloomy jail, and loathsome,  
    Many a weary week he lay;  
Then they led him to his trial,  
    Led him with their thieves away.  
In the felons' gang they chained him,  
    With the vilest of the vile;  
Side by side along the highway  
    Thus they traveled many a mile.  
From the base and cruel thralldom,  
    Unreleased by day or night,  
Worn and weary in the body,  
    But in spirit strong and bright.  
So they came to ancient Chelmsford,  
    Where in irons, day by day,  
Waiting for the near assizes,  
    In the common jail he lay.

Now with deepening tints the autumn  
    Touched the old majestic wood,  
And the sylvan kings enfolded  
    In their dying drapery stood,  
Impotent as some old giant,

*James Parnell*

Shorn of all his fiery hair.  
Bald and round the sun ascended  
Through the still and misty air,  
With his bonds of wreathing vapor  
Struggling for his summer sway;  
But pale flower and leaf enfeebled  
Felt his power had passed away.

Sadder than the waning season  
Grew each manly spirit then;  
Colder, darker than the vapors  
Bigotries enshrouded men.  
To their court they led the Quaker,  
In his iron fetters bound;  
As he passed the people wondered  
At the clanking shackles' sound.  
"Is this man among the felons?  
He so simple and so good;  
Though he be a canting Quaker,  
Are his hands imbrued in blood?"  
Thus the pitying people murmured  
At such outrage in their land,  
Till the judges bade the jailer  
Strike the shackles from his hand.

Then his cruel foes arraigned him,  
Charged with great and grievous crimes;  
Heresies and dread seditions,  
Fearful in their turbid times.  
"Much," they said, "he taught the people,  
From the Church to set them free;  
And with deep and fierce invective  
Spake against the powers that be."

## *Lays of Quakerdom*

Round the judge each persecutor  
    Whispered his malicious word,  
And against him court and jury  
    With their savage hatred stirred.  
Friend or counsel they denied him,  
    And his simple right to speak;  
Lone he stood, and undefended,  
    Like his MASTER, still and meek.

Then the jury found him guiltless;  
    But the judge in anger spake,  
Saying, "This man and his people  
    Every law and ritual break.  
For his bold contempt of rulers,  
    And his scoff at things divine,  
We commit him at discretion  
    To imprisonment and fine!"  
Silent PARNELL heard the sentence,  
    But he looked so calm and high,  
As they led him back to prison,  
    There to linger and to die!  
O'er Colchester Castle's threshold  
    Then he entered to his doom;  
When again he passed the portal,  
    Passed he to his nameless tomb.

Oh! it was a shame and sorrow,  
    When in *England* people saw  
Men for conscience sake imprisoned,  
    In the name of GOD and law.  
They have learned a better lesson  
    In these latter days of light,  
When the noble English *people*

*James Parnell*

Champion Europe for the right.  
Still Colchester's Castle turrets  
    Old and gray in Essex stand;  
Still in feudal isolation,  
    Frowning o'er the cultured land,  
'Leagured by those old besiegers,  
    Winter's wind and summer's rain;  
While around, the peaceful reapers  
    Sing upon the wide domain;  
Undisturbed the ivy clammers  
    Over all the massive towers,  
And along the moat and rampart  
    Sporting children hide in flowers.

But within the same old prison  
    Yawns amid perpetual gloom,  
With insatiate jaws of granite,  
    Dismal as a living tomb.  
Since the old days when the Romans  
    Held them with imperial sway,  
In these walls had many a captive  
    Breathed his wretched life away.  
Here the loyal LUCAS perished,  
    And the brave and noble LLISLE;  
What time FAIRFAX with his Round-heads  
    Tramped along the castle aisle.  
But of all the noble number,  
    Who the coming death defied,  
Never one like PARNELL suffered,  
    Never one like PARNELL died.

When the winter winds were sweeping  
    Round the castle's massive walls,



## *Lays of Quakerdom*

Shrieking in at grated casements,  
Howling through the antique halls;  
In the vast and vaulted chambers,  
Ever sighing, faint and low;  
Through the close and dismal dungeons,  
Wailing dirge-like, sad and slow;  
Still in mournful cadence blending,  
Like a mighty human moan,  
As of spirits, yet imprisoned  
In the huge and solid stone;  
With the woes of all its victims  
So the castle seemed to groan.

Sick and sleepless PARNELL lying  
Through the mid-night's chill and gloom,  
In the winter's sullen summons,  
Heard his own approaching doom.  
Months had passed: no hope of pardon  
To the patient prisoner came,  
Though to rulers many a pleader  
Spake his sufferings and his name.  
Never was such intercession  
Made for any in that day;  
Of his people some did proffer  
In his very stead to stay.  
But the rulers' hearts were hardened,  
For the land was filled with strife,  
And the dread of civil warfare  
Cheapened every human life.

So they heeded not the Quaker,  
Who with steadfast faith and love  
Bade his suffering people gather



*James Parnell*

Strength and counsel from above.  
All the while his persecutors  
    Seemed in every torment skilled,  
And the jailer and the keeper  
    With a fiendish fury filled.  
Now with brutal stripes they beat him;  
    Now his food they bore away,  
Till in sickness, starved and bleeding,  
    On the stony floor he lay.  
Couch and raiment then denied him,  
    Though his parting hour seemed nigh;  
Friends and kindred all excluded,  
    Thus they left him there to die.

But yet unsubdued, his spirit,  
    With a calm and mighty will,  
Held the body's failing pulses,  
    Beating in their channels still:  
Beating weaker, beating slower,  
    As the great soul, day by day,  
With a sense of power and triumph,  
    Kept the gloomy king at bay.  
Thus in that tremendous conflict  
    Wore his last long night away.

Morning came: it cometh slowly  
    Through the gloom of prison bars,  
When all night the captive keepeth  
    His lone vigil of the stars.  
Morning came, and over England  
    Brought the vapors on the breeze,  
With a lazy motion rolling  
    Inward from the circling seas;

*Lays of Quakerdom*

Onward, upward slowly drifting,  
    Folding round the castle wall;  
Swathing massive tower and turret,  
    Dense and heavy, like a pall;  
Driving through the prison grating,  
    With a keen and cutting chill,  
Where, amid the shivering dampness  
    PARNELL lay, so weak and still;  
While around the heavy vapor,  
    (Piercing feeble nerve and bone),  
Drop by drop, condensed and trickled  
    Down the cold and flinty stone.  
In the stifling air the martyr  
    Slower drew his laboring breath,  
And upon his pallid forehead  
    Lay the heavy dews of death.

Then to soothe his parting moments  
    Loving friends in stillness came,  
Whom his cruel foes admitted  
    To his cell, for very shame.  
On the old familiar faces  
    Sweetly fell his dying smile,  
As he said, "I linger with you  
    But a very little while;  
*Keep the faith and fight the battle,*  
    *For the crown awaits you: lo!*  
*I behold the glory breaking!*  
    DO NOT HOLD ME!—LET ME GO!"

Then they seemed to see the prison  
    With a sudden radiance bright,  
As from some transcendent presence,

*James Parnell*

Passing in a flood of light;  
And amid the awful splendor,  
Each pale watcher held his breath;  
But within the gloom returning  
Stood that mighty victor—DEATH!

So he perished—that young martyr:  
Save his people, few beside  
Of the busy world remember  
That he ever lived or died.  
*But a true man lives forever*  
In the great heart of the race,  
With a slow but certain justice,  
Finding his appointed place.  
And in that time when the peoples  
Shall recall their great and true,  
And the dead of all the ages  
Summon to that high review;  
When the world shall seek its jewels,  
For the Future's glorious crown,  
And the hand of higher manhood  
Write each noble story down;  
In that swiftly-coming era,  
When it calls the splendid roll  
Of all those who lived and suffered  
*For the freedom of the soul;*  
Then in that time with the jewels,  
And in answer to the call,  
Shall appear the youthful martyr  
*Of Colchester's Castle-wall.*









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